



HARTFORD
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA®

Alive through great music!

Carolyn Kuan, Music Director

February 24, 2023

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Conservation and Development:

I am writing to you as the President and CEO of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, located at 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, 06106, and as a resident of South Glastonbury, 06073. First and foremost, I want to thank the subcommittee for the important work you do and your positive impact on the lives of all Connecticut residents. At this time I would like to call you attention to the Governor's proposed successor state budget as it presently stands, which returns state funding for arts, culture, and tourism to 2019 levels. That level of funding was inadequate then and is even less adequate now. A few quick data points to consider:

- For every \$1 Connecticut invested per capita in arts and culture in 2020, Massachusetts and New York invested \$1.60 and Rhode Island invested \$2.
- At \$1.11 per capita, pre-pandemic state funding for tourism ranks lowest among our neighbors—Rhode Island (\$5.05), New York (\$3.07), and Massachusetts (\$1.65)—making it difficult to compete for tourists in those markets.

This is despite the well-documented and deep impact these sectors have on our state:

- Comprised of more than 1,000 organizations.
- Represents \$40 billion (13.4%) of the state domestic product.
- Directly and indirectly employs a workforce of 175,000.
- When adequately funded, state investments return \$3 in revenues for each \$1 invested and returns begin to be realized in the same fiscal year.

If we go back to pre-pandemic funding levels, the state will lose the considerable investments it made in these sectors in the FY2022/2023 budget. The Connecticut Arts Alliance, Connecticut Humanities, and Connecticut Tourism Coalition have worked together on an Arts, Culture, and Tourism Funding Roadmap that offers legislators a guide to meaningful, reliable, and equitable investment in these important contributors to the state's economy and workforce. The Roadmap addresses the historical underfunding by proposing an investment that is:

- At a level that fully supports tourism and cultural organizations in making Connecticut a more attractive place to visit, work, and live.
- Consistent over time to minimize operational disruption, improve long-term planning and sustainability, and maximize the return on the state's investment.
- Distributed so that arts and cultural organizations -- especially those that have been historically under-resourced -- have equal access to funding opportunities, and so that Connecticut can compete with neighboring states for visitors.

166 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Administration
860.246.8742

Ticket Services
860.244.2999

Fax
860.247.1720

hartfordsymphony.org

- Backed up with metrics and data that demonstrate value.
- Administered by trusted public and private partners to ensure accountability.

It is difficult to overstate the impact of these sectors. From the perspective of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, the impact of the performing arts in particular goes far beyond dollars and cents. One only has to attend a performance of exquisite music performed by highly dedicated artists, or join others in helping produce a community event like the orchestra's free "Symphony in the Park" at Hartford's Bushnell Park, or observe the absolute fascination and delight in a child's eyes as a symphony musician helps them discover the sheer magic of playing a musical instrument for the very first time – and you know: The arts are an essential part of the human experience and the very lifeblood of healthy, vibrant communities.

This work is more seriously threatened by existential economic crisis than at any other time in my 35-year career. Simply put, we need the legislature's help to ensure our survival and that of so many fellow arts, culture and tourism organizations.

I want to thank the subcommittee once again for your ongoing work. I urge all subcommittee members to consider that the Governor's budget takes us backwards in a way we simply can't afford. Instead, please consider the Funding Roadmap to ensure the considerable investment the legislature has already made in arts, culture, and tourism in the current budget is not lost. I am available to work with you in any manner that is helpful as the legislative session progresses.

With deep gratitude –



Steve Collins
President & CEO

*A few additional facts about the CT Arts, Culture, and Tourism Sector:

- Comprised of more than 1,000 organizations
- Represents \$40 billion (13.4%) of the state domestic product
- Directly and indirectly employs a workforce of 175,000
- When adequately funded, state investments return \$3 in revenues for each \$1 invested and returns begin to be realized in the same fiscal year